

USES OF A LAUGH.

J. B. O.

I would be willing to choose my friend by the quality of his laugh, and abide the issue. A glad, gushing outflow, a clear ringing, mellow note of the soul, as surely indicates a genial and genuine nature as the rainbow in the dewdrop heralds the morning sun, or the frail flower in the wilderness betrays the zephyr-tossed seed of the parterre—an ornamental plot of ground.

A laugh is one of God's truths. It tolerates no disguises. Falsehood may train its voice to flow in softest cadences, its lips to wreath into smiles of surpassing sweetness, its face to put on that look we trust in, but its laugh will destroy the mockery. Who has not started and shuddered at the hollow laugh of some velvet-voiced Mephistopheles, whose sinuous fascinations, without this note of warning, this premonitory rattle, might have bound the soul with a strong spell.

Leave nature alone. If she is noble, her broadest expression will soon tone itself down to a fine accordance with life's earnestness; if she is base, no silken interweavings can keep out of sight her ugly head of discord. If we put a laugh into a straight-jacket and leading-strings, it becomes an abomination; if we attempt to refine it, we destroy its pure, mellifluous ring; if we suppress a laugh, it struggles and dies on the heart, and the place where it lies is apt ever to be weak and vulnerable.

No, laugh truly, as you would speak truly, and both the inner and outer man will rejoice. A full, spontaneous outburst opens all the delicate valves of being, and glides a subtle oil through all its complicated mechanism.

Laugh heartily, if you would keep the dew of your youth. There is no need to lay our girlhood and boyhood so doggedly down upon the altar of sacrifice as we toil up life's mountain. Dear innocent children, lifting their dewy eyes and fair foreheads to the benedictions of angels, prattling and gamboling because it is a great joy to live, should flit like sunbeams among the sternfaced and stalwart, young men and maidens should walk with strong elastic tread, and cheerful voices among the uncertain. White hairs should be no more the insignia of age, but the crown of ripe and perennial youth.

Laugh for your beauty. The joyous carry a fountain of light in their eyes, and round into rosy dimples where the echoes of gladness play at "hide-and-go-seek." Your "lean and hungry Cassius" is never betrayed into a laugh, and his smile is more cadaverous than his despair.

Laugh if you would live. He only exists who drags his days after him like a massive chain, asking sympathy with uplifted eyebrows and weak utterance as the beggar asks alms. Better die, for your own sake and the world's sake, than to pervert the uses and graces and dignities of life. Make your own sunshine and your music, keep your heart open to the smile of the good Father, and brave all things.

"Care to your coffin adds a nail, no doubt,
And every laugh so merry draws one out.

ELEMENTS OF A TRUE WOMAN.

[Essay read by Eva M. Foster, at the Common School Commencement, June 4, Warsaw, Ind.]

"What is a true woman?" The word of God tells us that her price is far above rubies. (Prov. 31: 10.) Therefore measuring her by the Bible standard, let us notice first among the elements of true womanhood—Piety. She seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. This trait of character has been described thus: "Piety is a meek-eyed maiden of Heaven, who holds her sister Faith with one hand, and Hope with the other, and looking up with a confiding smile can say: my treasure is above."

The twin sister of Piety is Purity. The pure in heart shall see God. (Matt. 5: 8.) All within us that lies open to the eyes of God should be pure, and our words should correspond with our thoughts.

That women are more honest than men, our penitentiaries will show; that she is more religiously inclined, all our church records show; that she is more devotional, our prayer-meetings will fully demonstrate.

She acts on the adage, "Better wear out than rust out." She feels that to do good is noble; but to be good is nobler.

The poor and needy find a place in her heart, the sick and suffering in her sympathy, the sinful and criminal, the oppressed and down-trodden, a home in her compassion.

The most reckless sinner, the roughest wanderer, secured in his hours of loneliness to the smile which maternal love sheds over his infancy.

So intense is her power that even the memory of a praying mother's hand upon his head has held back many an erring son from guilt. "Her children rise up and call her blessed." The bonds of mother's love are not loosened by time nor broken by death. Even when she has gone to her last rest, the mother in heaven sways a mighty influence over her child, and draws him, by unseen chords, to herself and to God.

As a nurse, one woman will endure more than five men. We need no better

example of this than the women of the war.

Our true women have faithfulness and firmness of mind. Although she was the first in transgression, she has amply atoned. She stood by the expiring Savior when Peter and the other disciples forsook their Lord, and she was first at the tomb.

True happiness depends not so much upon what is thought of us by others as what we really are. We are placed in this world for a purpose. God did not intend us to be idle worthless creatures; each one has a calling and it devolves upon us to make use of the power he has given us. Character is power in a much higher sense than knowledge is power.

Could we see ourselves as others see us, we would not be so helpless and negligent about what we call the trivial things. Every action is an influence and an influence never dies.

There is a truthfulness in action as well as in words which is essential in the making of a true woman. It should be our aim at all times to be what we wish to appear. Our words and actions should harmonize, and slowly we will secure the reputation of a true woman.

To be a woman in the truest and highest sense is to be the best thing beneath the skies. Woman is doubtless, capable of filling almost any position in which she may be placed. True womanliness is the outward expression of a most admirable inner being; it embraces graciousness, kindness delicate courtesy, the helping hand that is never reached for in vain; the sympathy that rejoices with a friend who is glad and that truly mourns when that friend's hour of trial comes. Surely it was the true womanly woman whose price was said to be above rubies.

Give her the fruits of her hand, and let her own works praise her in the gates. It is the women that have charity for all that are true to the world, true to themselves and true to their God, that are wanted and needed in this free country.

As Shakespeare notes it, "To thine own self be true and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

Can you say that women have not a part in making a nation. Mothers, sisters and daughters, it behooves us, as true women to rouse to the sense of our duty and not let it be said, we have not done our duty.

The past required women who were good and true, the present demands them, the future will need them, and eternity without them, would be void.

No tears are shed when the man dies who has lived only for himself.